

# U.S. soldiers meet with Dire Dawa leaders

## Pre-deployment site survey paves way for future projects

Story and photos by Cpl. G. Lane Miley

**DIRE DAWA, Ethiopia** – Soldiers from the U.S. Army's 412<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion continued relationship-building efforts in Dire Dawa and the surrounding communities here March 1 to 6 in support of the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa mission to combat transnational terrorism in the Horn of Africa.

The civil affairs soldiers, under the command of their team leader Capt. Jeremy C. Rose, coordinated with civic leadership from the local Dire Dawa and the surrounding communities for a proposed Medical Civic Action Program and a Veterinary Civic Action Program toward the end of the month.

In order for the teams to provide the local population with these civic action programs, it is crucial for them to have a strong bond with the local leaders.

Rose said the leadership from Dire Dawa is constantly communicating with him and his team. He said the team often sees Ato Mohammed Ouguz Hasan, chief administrator for Dire Dawa, around the town a few times each week, whether they have meetings scheduled with him or not.

"He knows why we are here and wants to get the rest of his people [on board]," said Capt. Rose of Ato Hasan, who also serves as chief of the Issa tribe.

Rose explained that Hasan has traveled extensively in the United States and understands what the civil affairs team can help him and his people achieve.

"He introduces us to tribal elders when we go into new areas so people receive us with a warm welcome," said Rose, a Huber Heights, Ohio, native.

Since deploying to Djibouti – where CJTF-HOA is based at Camp Lemonier – more than two months ago, Rose and his team have built a rap-

port with the civic leaders of Dire Dawa and the surrounding communities and have seen very few problems among the leadership.

"The people here are very receptive, but sometimes their expectations are too high," he said.

Rose said when he goes into an area and asks the leaders what their people need, they often expect something to be done right away – this is the only problem his team has seen.

"The greatest challenge has been finding out exactly what they need," said Staff Sgt. Ismael L. Reyna, team sergeant. "[But by] being persistent the truth comes out quickly."

The civil affairs team leader explained that he and his team have the village elders prioritize which projects they need completed, and often they request projects in the education area.

Rose said after the elders agree to

maintain the projects, such as building or refurbishing schools, he proposes them to his leadership, and if the funding comes available the projects are completed.

He said in one village some of the older members of the town remem-

bered the Peace Corps coming through nearly 30 years ago and teaching them baseball and some English – this is a shining example for Rose of the importance of providing a positive in-

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(Top Photo) (From left to right) Feseha Zerihun, chairman of the administration council here; Army Capt. Jeremy C. Rose, team leader for civil affairs team assigned to the area; Marine Brig. Gen. Mastin M. Robeson, commander CJTF-HOA; Ahmed Buh, chief of rural development for the Dire Dawa administrative council; and Mebratu Gebre Yesus, security chief of the administrative council, discuss how the contractor assigned to the project agreed that for each week they worked, they would volunteer to work one day with out pay. (Bottom Photo) (From right to left) Army officers, Capt. Mark A. Canada and Col. John S. Allerding, talk to officials from the medical clinic here about the Medical Civic Action Program scheduled to be conducted at the end of March. The soldiers are medical doctors assigned to the civic action team for the 412th Civil Affairs Battalion.

### The Horn Courier



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Cover photo by Spec. Eric M. McKeeby

Spec. Nathan See entertains a throng of Djiboutian children from the village of Aseyla during a mission to provide force protection for CJTF-HOA personnel. The 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment, Bravo Company, travelled last week with a team of Old Guard soldiers with CJTF-HOA civil affairs troops to various project sites in Djibouti.

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